



Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 15, 20 and 30 as indicated below.

Please cancel claims 16 and 32 without prejudice.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (currently amended): A multipole overvoltage protection system for a multiphase power supply system, the multipole overvoltage protection system comprising:
a first overvoltage protection element connected in a first leg of the power supply system; and

a second overvoltage protection element connected in a second leg of the power supply system, the second overvoltage protection element being coupled to the first overvoltage protection element so that the second overvoltage protection element ignites when the first overvoltage protection element ignites and the first overvoltage protection element ignites when the second overvoltage protection element ignites;

a first ignition aid associated with the first overvoltage protection element; and

a second ignition aid associated with the second overvoltage protection element, the first and second ignition aids being coupled to each other.

Claim 16 (canceled)

Claim 17 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 15 further comprising a central ignition aid connected to the first and second overvoltage protection elements.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 15 wherein the first and second overvoltage protection elements are disposed in a common

housing.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 15 wherein:

the first overvoltage protection element includes a first and a second electrode with a first air breakdown spark gap therebetween; and

the second overvoltage protection element includes a third and a fourth electrode with a second air breakdown spark gap therebetween;

wherein the first, second, third and fourth electrodes are disposed so that the second air breakdown spark gap ignites when the first air breakdown spark gap ignites and the first air breakdown spark gap ignites when the second air breakdown spark gap ignites due to a presence of a plasma.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 16 15 wherein:

the first ignition aid includes a first ignition electrode and a first ignition circuit connected to the first ignition electrode; and

the second ignition aid includes a second ignition electrode and a second ignition circuit connected to the second ignition electrode.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 17 wherein the central ignition aid includes a first and a second ignition electrode and a central ignition circuit connected to the first and second ignition electrodes, the first ignition electrode cooperating with the first overvoltage protection element and the second ignition electrode cooperating with the second overvoltage protection element.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 19 wherein the first and second electrodes are disposed coaxially with respect to each other and the third and fourth electrodes are disposed coaxially with respect to each other.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 22 further comprising a first ignition electrode disposed coaxially with respect to the first and

second electrodes and a second ignition electrode disposed coaxially with respect to the third and fourth electrodes.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 22 wherein the first, second, third and fourth electrodes each have a respective varying cross-section over a length of the respective electrode.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 24 wherein the first and second ignition electrode each have a respective varying cross-section over a length of the respective electrode.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 18 wherein the housing surrounds the electrodes and includes a lining.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 26 wherein the housing includes POM-Teflon.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 18 wherein the housing surrounds the electrodes and has a sealed, pressure-tight and pressure-resistant design.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The overvoltage protection system as recited in claim 28 wherein the housing has an outer pressure cylinder.

Claim 30 (currently amended): A method for operation of a multipole overvoltage protection system in a multiphase power supply system, the overvoltage protection system including a first and a second overvoltage protection element each connected in a respective leg of the power supply system, the method comprising coupling the first and second overvoltage protection elements so that the second overvoltage protection element ignites when the first overvoltage protection element ignites and so that the first overvoltage protection element ignites when the second overvoltage protection element ignites, wherein:

the first overvoltage protection element includes a first ignition aid; and
the second overvoltage protection element includes a second ignition aid connected so
as to ignite when the first ignition aid ignites and so that the first ignition aid ignites when the
second ignition aid ignites.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 30 wherein the multiphase power supply system includes a low voltage system.

Claim 32 (canceled)

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 30 wherein:
the first overvoltage protection element includes a first air breakdown spark gap; and
the second overvoltage protection element includes a second air breakdown spark gap;
wherein the first and second air breakdown spark gaps are disposed in a common housing so that a first plasma produced upon an igniting of the first air breakdown spark gap ignites the second air breakdown spark gap and a second plasma produced upon an igniting of the second air breakdown spark gap ignites the first air breakdown spark gap.